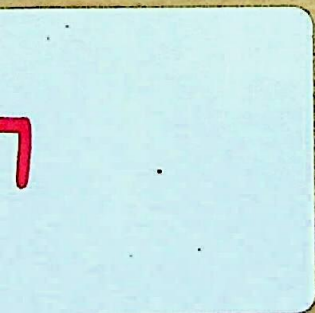


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A PUZZLE IN INDIAN EPIGRAPHY

BY

Prof. K. M. SHEMBAYNEKAR, M. A.

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A Puzzle in Indian Epigraphy

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PROF. K. M. SHEMAVNEKAR, M. A.

MORE than half a century has elapsed since Fergusson started his novel theory of the foundation of the Samvat era. Stripped of its speculative extravagance, yet confirmed in the main by the later researches of Fleet, it easily attained to the rank of a well-established historical fact, and became, in its turn, a solid basis for many another hypothesis. According to this theory, the present Vikrama era was founded, not by the King Vikramāditya of the Hindu legends, but by the Mālava clan (*Mālava-gaṇa*) in commemoration of their republican government, and Candragupta II of the Gupta dynasty adopted it as his own era a few centuries later, and gave it the name which it still bears. It will be easily perceived, first, that this view makes the existence of the legendary Vikramāditya a very doubtful question, if not entirely a nonentity. And secondly, it reveals the very surprising fact (if fact at all it was), that two thousand years ago there was in India a warlike clan which was not only powerful enough to constitute itself a republic and found an era, but also fortunate enough to outlive all the greatest monarchs of Bhāratavarṣa in the perpetuation of that era.

And yet how slender sometimes, and how uncertain, the evidence on which mighty issues rest! In the present instance it is only an expression or two in the Mandasor inscriptions, on the doubtful interpretation of which such a huge historical fabric has been reared. Needless to say that it must inevitably fall in case that interpretation is proved erroneous. And as it is quite unjustifiable to reject, except on the strongest grounds, an interpretation which has been in vogue for over half a century, I propose in the present article:—

Firstly, to give a decidedly better and more harmonious interpretation of the phrase *Mālava-gana-sthiti*, which occurs in the Mandasor inscriptions, citing a competent authority in its support for the first time,

Secondly to prove that King Vikramāditya was a historical personage, the son of Mahendra of the Pramāra dynasty, the emperor of Ujjayini, the founder of the era which bears his name, and the patron of learning.

And thirdly, and lastly, to explain why the era was styled the Mālava era in its early centuries.

Fleet, whose rendering of the expression under discussion has been accepted by all antiquarians, with but the slight modification suggested by Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, naturally took the words *gaṇa* and *sthiti* in their very usual sense. Little did he imagine that the former is used as a neologism in the Mandasor inscriptions. He therefore takes it to mean 'a tribe' (*samūha*), which is the ordinary connotation of the word. So also the latter is taken by him in its most ordinary sense. And thus the two words *gaṇa* and *sthiti* in juxtaposition have been twisted to yield the meaning '(the reckoning from) the tribal constitution of the Mālavas.' Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, however, corrects Fleet by justly pointing out that the word *sthiti* must be taken here in the sense of 'usage.' According to him the phrase means 'the usage of the Mālava tribe.'

But he too failed to perceive that *gaṇa* in that particular context, means *gaṇanā*, a sense which is recorded by the *Śabdārṇava-kośa*: *Gaṇaslu gaṇanāyām syāt gaṇeṣe pramathē cayē*. The *Śabdārṇava*, indeed, is not extant at present,² but the above citation is found in the commentary of Mallinātha on stanza 33³ of the *Meghadūta*. The commentator seems to have particularly availed himself of the aid of this *Kośa* in writing his commentary on the above-mentioned poem of Kālidāsa. From the quotations given there it is quite evident that this *Kośa* records more meanings of words than the *Amara*, *Medini* and others.

Kielhorn, indeed, had felt the necessity for taking the word *gaṇa* as equivalent to 'reckoning,' (*gaṇanā*), in connection with the expression *Mālavānām gaṇa-sthityā*, etc; and thus having hit upon the right sense of the word by a wonderfully accurate conjecture, he observes,

1. Compare, for a similar use of the word *sthiti*, *Rājataranginī*, i 119.
2. I am informed there is a MS. of it in the *Bodleian* by Mr. P. P. S. Sastri. There appears to be a MS. of this work in the Madras Government MSS. Library, *Editor*.
3. This is stanza 37 in the Southern editions of the work. *Editor*.

"and I would accordingly translate the phrases, *Mālavānām gaṇa-sthityā* and *Mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt*, simply with "by, or, according to, the reckoning of the Mālavas".¹ Equally accurate is his remark that it would not be permissible to supply, as was done by Mr. Fleet, the words "the reckoning from" simply to bring out the meaning of the instrumental'.² Of all the Sanskritists who devoted their attention to the solution of this epigraphic problem—and they were not a few, Indians and Europeans alike—he alone seems to have realized the important fact that the suppression of such indispensable words as 'the reckoning from' would be highly unjustifiable, if Fleet's interpretation of the word *gaṇa* were correct. Indeed, such a suppression would be against the very genius of the Sanskrit language. And yet Kielhorn could not turn his conjectural interpretation to advantage, probably, for want of the requisite authority. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar criticises his suggestions as follows:—'He (Kielhorn) thus makes *gaṇa* equivalent to *gaṇanā*, which is objectionable. For the word *gaṇa* has never the sense of *gaṇanā*, and when placed in juxtaposition with Mālava must signify a 'tribe' and a 'tribe' only.'³ But with the authority just cited, it is scarcely necessary to remark that Kielhorn, and not his critic, is in the right. The word *gaṇa* does mean *gaṇanā*, and Vatsabhatti has evidently used it in that sense, inasmuch as it quite suits the context. Thus the phrase *gaṇa-sthiti* means neither more nor less than '*gaṇanā-paddhati* (mode of reckoning)'. Dr. Bhandarkar is scarcely more correct in the second part of his remark, viz. that the word *gaṇa*, when placed in juxtaposition with Mālava, must signify a 'tribe' and a 'tribe' only. For whatever ambiguity there might lurk in the compound *Mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt*, there is absolutely none in the uncompounded phrase *Mālavānām-gaṇa-sthityā*. That is, in other words, the compound is to be dissolved as *Mālavānām-gaṇa-sthitiḥ* and not as *Mālava-gaṇasyā sthitiḥ*. The whole expression, therefore, means 'The system of reckoning (time) of the Mālavas'; i.e. prevalent in the Mālava country, or among the Mālava people.

Then again, the phrase *śrī-mālavagaṇamṇāte* which occurs in the third Mandasor inscription, may now be rendered with 'in the year counted according to the reckoning of the Mālavas'. Strangely

¹ *Ind. Ant.* xix pp. 56-7.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Bhandarkar Com.* p. 191.

enough. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, who brought the inscription to light, gets puzzled over the word 'āmnāta.' The word, however, means simply 'counted' or 'mentioned'. In this sense it is of pretty frequent occurrence, as, for instance, in the *Kāvyaaprakāśa*, vii, *atra daiva'a-śabdo puṁsi āmnātopi na kēnacit prayujyātē*. And now it will be easily perceived that the word *gaṇa* is used in all the three Mandasor inscriptions, as a neologism, the sense of which is recorded only by the *Śabdārṇava-kośa*. When the proper sense is assigned to it the Gordian knot is cut, and the whole verse yields a meaning which is quite felicitous. Had the author really meant to convey the idea of the rising of the Mālavas as a sovereign clan, as has been believed so far, it is pretty certain that he would have used the proper word, namely, *utthāna*, instead of *sthiti*, without doing the least violence to the metre. It is also interesting to note from the philological point of view, that the word *varṇa*, which, in its origin, is exactly similar to *gaṇa*, came to have the sense of *varṇanū* in later times. The *Amara* does not record it, but the *Medinī* does; "Yaśogūṇa-kathāśvapi;" which little fact is sufficient to bear out the truth of my remarks. But interesting as the word is, it is still more interesting in its contradictory form. Vatsabhatti has twice used the word *nagaṇa* to the great confusion of the decipherers of epigraphs. Fleet and others have taken it as the name of a tree, though such a tree is never mentioned by any of the *Kośas*. Thus a veritable pseudonym has been brought into existence without the knowledge that it is so! But now in the light of this new sense of the word *gaṇa*, it will be easily perceived that *nagaṇa* simply means 'countless' (*na vidyate gaṇah-gaṇana yasya*). And this meaning of the word suits very well the two contexts in which it occurs. It is impossible to suppose that Vatsabhatti, the author, indulged his poetic fancy so far as to group with the best known flower-plants a tree like *nagaṇa*—a tree unknown, not only to poets but even to lexicographers.

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that the phrase *gaṇa-sthiti* can no longer be a proof of the existence of anything like a republic of the Mālavas. In connection with Mālava it simply stands for 'the system of reckoning time in the Mālava country.' Every student of Sanskrit knows that the names of countries are always plural in form, and as such they have absolutely no reference to the political constitution of the people. Even the distinct mention of

warlike clans as such does not prove anything of their internal form of government. For we find the Vṛṣṇis or Yādavas mentioned as a powerful race in the *Mahābhārata*, but clearly they were under a monarchic government. So also, in later Indian history, several Rājput clans like the Rāṭhors, renowned for their bravery, are mentioned without the least reference to their political constitution.

And now the next question is: Who founded the Mālava era, if not the Mālava clan? To this question there is but one answer: King Vikramāditya, of the Pramāra dynasty, the son of Mahēndra, the emperor of Ujjayini, and the hero of numberless romantic legends, founded the era in the year 57 B.C. That he was a historical personage and not a fictitious character, I shall now prove from sources which scarcely seem to have been handled heretofore for this purpose¹. The first and earliest account of him is to be found in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* which, though not very old in itself, is yet considerably old in its original, namely, the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya. Another account of him we get in the chronicles of the Rājput bards, who, whatever their drawbacks as historians might be, were never in the habit of giving false names and fictitious genealogies. From these chronicles of the Rājput bards Abūl Fazl has given a short account of Bikramajit (Vikramāditya) and also of his genealogy². According to this account, Āditya Punwār (Pramāra) was the founder of the dynasty. The name of Vikramāditya's father is given as Gandhabba (Gandharva) there, but I think, it is hardly correct. The names of several kings were probably missing, and the bards, in consequence, were obliged to prolong the reigns of the known monarchs, in order to make up for the discrepancy. Thus the genealogy, though correct in so far as it is available, is not quite complete. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* has it, that Vikramāditya was the son of Mahēndraditya and Saumyadarśanā, and I think, that is the more correct account of the two³. The fact that Āditya was the founder of the race, and that Mahendra and Vikrama appended the title Āditya, each after his name, clearly proves, that the dynasty took it as a common appellation, even as the Guptas did three centuries later. It is not therefore an integral part of the name of the founder of the Sāmvat era, any

1. See *Beginning of South Indian History*, by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, published 1918, pp. 56-7. Editor.

2. *Ain-i-Akbari*, Suba of Malwa.

3. *Kathāsaritsāgara*, XVIII, 1.

more than is the word Gupta of such names as Samudragupta, Candragupta, etc. Hence it is that we find in the Iron Pillar inscription at Delhi the name of the king given as Candra only, and not as Candragupta. Thus the name Vikramāditya was originally only a proper name, and not at all a high-sounding honorific title. True, the name became such a title in after times; but this was more because of its immortal association with the great monarch who bore it first, than because of its import. Instances in support of this view are to be found in the histories of all countries. Names like Akbar, Śivaji, Fredrick and Napoleon—names which were only proper names at first—became later on honorific titles for the descendants of those great men and other claimants for distinction. If Candragupta II, then, assumed the title Vikramāditya, as unquestionably he did, it only proves the fact that the name of the great founder of the Vikrama Samvat had attained a very high degree of renown in the 4th century A.D.

The *Kathāsaritsāgara* gives an interesting account of the parentage, birth, and romantic exploits of *this* Vikramāditya, and of no other. The romance we may discard here, as it is useless for our present purpose. But the account of his parentage and birth is very important from the historical point of view. For, in the first place, such a graphic account cannot be a fiction; and, secondly the name of the hero and the character which is given to him therein, are in perfect accordance with those of the founder of the Vikrama era—the traditional Vikramāditya. And an examination into the date of the *Brhatkathā* will clearly settle the point. The *Brhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya, as is quite well known, was a book written, not indeed in Sanskrit, but in the Paisāci language. In bulk it was as big as the present *Mahābhārata*, on which obviously it seems to have been modelled. For if the *Mahābhārata* is divided into 18 *parvans*, the *Brhatkathā* was divided into as many *lambakas*. Evidently, therefore, this equality as regards the number of divisions and the number of verses, leaves little or no doubt that Guṇāḍhya emulated Vyāsa¹. As to the date of this prolific writer, it is generally believed that he was a contemporary of the Sātavāhana kings, an account of whom he gives in his book.

1. Hopkins, in fixing the date of the *Māhabhārata*, clearly seems to be unaware of Guṇāḍhya's debt to Vyāsa. If the date of the *Brhatkathā* is the first century A. D., the date of the present *Mahābhārata* must be at least a few centuries before Christ.

Any thing later than that in point of time, he does not narrate. And this is what helps us in fixing his date as the first century A. D. For, like the author of the *Mahābhārata*, he does not lay claim only to high antiquity, with the reservation of the right to describe later kings and events by way of prophecy. He has indeed, no reason to impose himself upon the reader as an older writer than he really is. Those scholars, therefore, who attempt to fix the date of the *Brhatkathā* as the 4th century A. D. are manifestly in the wrong. Dr A. B. Keith, indeed, frankly admits that there is no evidence to suppose that the book was not written in the 1st century A. D. But even taking it for granted that the *Brhatkathā* was composed in the 4th century A. D., it may be asked: What Vikramāditya is this that is described in the last *lambaka* thereof? For, as already remarked above, the account is not a fiction; and if that Vikramāditya were no other than Candragupta II, how is it possible that a writer who lived in the 4th century A. D., and who, therefore, was a contemporary—or almost a contemporary—of that monarch, should give such a false account as regards his parentage, country, etc.? Are we to believe that the author was so ignorant of these important particulars about the great Gupta emperor, if he chose him for one of his heroes? And, if not ignorant, what motive could he have—*cui bono*, as the Roman lawyer was wont to ask—for giving us such a tissue of falsehood? Certainly the Guptas were not like some plebeian monarchs, who endeavour to exalt themselves in the eyes of posterity by inventing specious relationships with former renowned families. On the contrary, so far from being plebeians, they came from a noble and distinguished stock, and inherited the best and noblest blood. In their inscriptions we find them dwelling at great length on the dignity which they derive from their nobility of descent, as well as their alliances with the Lichhavis and other distinguished clans of those times. The *Brhatkathā* must be regarded, therefore, as a work of the 1st century A. D., and the Vikramāditya described therein is no other than the founder of the Samvat era. The account of him as given in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* fully tallies with every thing which tradition has preserved of that great and good ruler.¹ According to this account, he was a *gana* attendant) of Śiva, Mālyavat by name, specially sent down to the

¹ *Kathāsaritsāgara*, XVIII, 1.

earth for the annihilation of the Mlechhas (barbarians), the suppression of anti-Vedic creeds like Buddhism, and the revival of Vedicism or Brāhmanism. He seems to have been a devout Śaiva, though not a bigot, and the creed of Śaivism seems to have obtained a permanent ascendancy in Mālava on account of the magnificence of his own piety. The famous shrine of Mahākāla at Ujjayinī, destroyed by the Muhammadans in the 13th century A. D., was, as we may now believe, built by this very Vikramāditya. The following extract from Ferishta, the celebrated historian, will be found very interesting in this connection.

‘ After the reduction of Guāliar, the King (Sultan Altamesh) marched his army towards Malwa, reduced the fort of Bhilsa, and took the city of Oojein (Ujjain), where he destroyed a magnificent temple dedicated to Mahakaly (Mahākāla) formed under the same plan with that of Somnāth. This temple is said to have occupied three hundred years in building, and was surrounded by a wall one hundred cubits in height. The image of Vikramaditya, who had been formerly prince of this country, and so renowned that the Hindus have taken an era from his death, as also the image of Mahakaly (Mahākāla), both of stone, with many other figures of brass, were found in the temple. These images the king caused to be conveyed to Dehli, and broken at the door of the great mosque.’¹

All this is perfectly in keeping with the creed, the greatness, and the beneficence, of the legendary Vikramāditya only. And nothing can be farther from the truth than to assign to Candragupta II the credit of such a notable achievement. For, in the first place, the Guptas were avowed Vaiṣṇavas in their creed, and secondly, there is not even the least reference to this in their inscriptions, though such a reference would be well in unison with the splendid account of their greatness which they are pleased to give us. It is besides absurd in the highest degree to imagine a Vaiṣṇava king, however wealthy or mighty he may be, rearing such a stupendous structure in honour of Śiva, a structure, which, according to the above account from Ferishta, must have strained the resources of a prosperous kingdom for a number of years.

The *Rājataranginī* also mentions two Vikramādityas, who, at any rate, are other than Candragupta II. The first of these two belongs to

¹ *Ferishta*, Trans. by Col. Briggs, Vol. i, p. 211.

a period which is, at least, a century B.C. : 'Then a king of the name of Pratāpāditya, a relative of King Vikramāditya, was brought by them from afar and crowned (on the throne of Kashmir)' The second Vikramāditya of Kalhana is Śilāditya of Ujjayinī. But so confused is the whole chronology of Kalhana in the case of the earlier rulers of Kāshmir, that he assigns a reign of three hundred years to Raṇāditya alone ! It is, therefore, perfectly clear that he is misled in his account of this latter king Vikramāditya. As a matter of fact, he criticises his predecessors for confounding the two kings.² But, I think that *they* are right, and that he himself is wrong. It also appears to me that he attributes to the second a grandeur and a renown which really belong to the first. Such a confusion, indeed, is natural in one, who, though a historian of good critical acumen, does not pretend to know the history of other dynasties but those of Kashmir. His first Vikramāditya therefore, is, in all probability, the same as the one described in the last book of the *Kathāsariitāsgara*, that is to say, he is the same as the founder of the Samvat era.

All this historical evidence, so far neglected by antiquarians, points unmistakably to one and the same Vikramāditya. And he is none other than the hero of the very numerous legends which survive to this day. His long and remarkably successful career, his patronage of learning, his romantic adventures, and his piety, seem, in their combination, to have imparted a peculiar glow and immortality to his name, which since then, became a source of inspiration for all aspiring Hindu princes. During his long and glorious reign there appears to have been that revival of Brāhmanism and Brahmanical learning which made Mālava a stronghold against Buddhism and Jainism, and at the same time the mother of poets and astronomers. A second, and in some respects similar, revival took place in the period of the Guptas also, but that was not certainly the first, as Dr. Keith and a number of Western Orientalists confidently assert. For the Guptas ~~are~~ ^{are} never credited with anything of the kind by the *purāṇas* which explicitly mention the Agnikula Kṣatriyas as the first restorers of the old order. Nor were they fortunate enough to leave behind them any kind of glorious traditions. But, however we may account for it, the fact remains undisputed that no tradition relating to any of the Gupt

¹ *Rājataranginī*, I, 2-6.

² *Ibid.*

emperors has been handed down to posterity. All their history, as is well known, is based on epigraphic and numismatic data. The vast body of tradition, on the other hand, refers only to that Vikramāditya who is the founder of the Samvat era. And so strong is their cumulative effect that at least Edgerton and Vincent Smith have, in spite of the epigraphic puzzle, recorded it as their opinion that such a king might have lived at the time, i.e. in the first century B.C.¹

And now when the epigraphic puzzle is got rid of, and a body of direct historical evidence has been adduced, the existence of the legendary Vikramaditya, I think, should be no more doubtful than that of Samudragupta in Indian history. Besides the legacy of traditions, he has left his immortal era to posterity.

As, however, antiquarians disbelieved the very fact of the foundation of the era by Vikramāditya, naturally they indulged their fancy in a large amount of speculation as regards its connection with his name. To their great satisfaction, they found in Candragupta II, their first Vikramāditya, a ruler, who, if not the actual founder of the era, was at least the patron and appropriator of the same. It is remarkable that none of the historians and scholars who have recorded this opinion seems to have been struck with the strangeness of the assumption. For it is not only against all analogy, but it is against the very Indian idea of imperial dignity. No Indian ruler has, as yet, attempted to appropriate, or rather misappropriate, the era founded by another. Had Candragupta made the alleged misappropriation, certainly it would have been a good example for a number of later kings to follow. And instead of a number of eras of mushroom growth that obtrude themselves upon our notice, we would have discovered only attempts at misappropriation in that case. No known king, however, down to the time of Śivaji, is guilty of such a crime. Few indeed have been fortunate enough to continue their eras for a long time; but all such as aspired to that greatness have been dignified enough to found them separately in commemoration of their supremacy. But besides these general reasons, Candragupta had an additional reason against the alleged misappropriation. The Gupta era had been already founded by his own illustrious ancestor in the year 319 A.D. And if he had patronized another era in supersession

¹Edgertons's *Vikrama's Adventures*, Intro., p.l xv.

of it, he would have been guilty of sullyng the sacred bequest of his own ancestor. Thus the belief that he gave his name to the Mālava era is only a gratuitous assumption, an assumption which has its origin in the misinterpretation of the phrase *gaṇa-sthiti*, and its development in the confusion consequent upon it. The era, in fact, was neither founded by the Mālava clan, as has been already proved above, nor named after Candragupta II, *alias* Vikramāditya.

Now it is true that the Śaṁvat era is mentioned in the earlier inscriptions without the founder's name connected with it. But that does not prove that it was nameless at the time, or that it was otherwise designated. For it is a fact, too flagrantly notorious, that Sanskrit writers have been all along in the habit of making an indifferent mention of the eras they use. Expressions, like 'the era,' 'the era that is current', 'after the lapse of—years since the Śaka Kings', etc., are generally to be met with in Sanskrit writings. Thus Varāhamihira simply says *gatāni varṣāni Śakendra-kālāt*, i.e., 'the years that passed since the time of the Śaka King'. His commentator, Utpala, also makes a similarly indifferent mention of the Śaka era: *Vasvaṣṭaṣṭamite* (888) Śake, at the end of his commentary. So also in the inscriptions: *Gupta-prakāle gaṇanām vidhāya* (Girnār Rock Inscription of Samudragupta); *Samāsu samatītāsu Śakānāmapi bhūbhujām* (Aihole inscription of Pulakeśin II). Thus it is clear that Sanskrit writers were not particular to mention eras in their proper style. It is very probable that the Gupta era also bore the full name of the founder, and in the popular parlance of those days it was known in its full and proper style. As to the Śālivāhana era, we find it generally styled the 'Śaka era' till nearly a thousand years from its foundation. But no antiquarian has, as yet, thought it worth his while to propound a theory similar to the one about the Śaṁvat era, probably because there is no king of the name of Śālivāhana about that period in Indian history, with whose name the era could be conveniently connected. It is, however, by no means difficult to explain the indifference or looseness of the style in which all eras are mentioned by Sanskrit writers.

First, they were handicapped by the exigency of the metre, which, in most cases, could not permit a full expression of the usual style of

1. *Bṛhatsamhitā*, VIII, 20.

the era. Secondly, there was a conflict of various eras in India in the early centuries after Christ. And it is scarcely necessary to remark that until that conflict ended in the supremacy of one and the abolition of others, writers and inscribers expressed themselves in general phrases in so far as reckoning of years was concerned. It is these general phrases that have so considerably added to the confusion of the writers of early Indian history, though the authors of the various inscriptions meant thereby to avoid ambiguity. Thirdly, men like Vatsabhaṭṭi, who flourished in the times of the Gupta rulers, would not offend their sovereigns by an explicit mention of the Vikrama-Saṁvat-*era*, while the Gupta era was the recognised era of the court and of official documents. The very fact, however, that the Vikrama Saṁvat is used in the Mandasor inscriptions is a piece of evidence which unmistakably proves that it was gradually gaining ground among the populace in spite of the rival eras. And the same fact completely vitiates the theory that has stood uncontradicted so far, viz., that the original Mālava era came to be styled the Vikrama era after Candragupta II, who gave himself the title of Vikramāditya. For, if it were so, how is it possible that Vatsabhaṭṭi should either be so ignorant or negligent as to retain the old style, even after the lapse of nearly a century since the supposed act of appropriation? The era indeed, is not discovered as yet with the name of Vikrama associated with it till the time of the Dhoolpur inscription of 842 A. D. The Candragupta theory would have been at least a plausible conjecture if it had been discovered that immediately after that monarch the Mālava era came to be designated the Vikrama era. But this is exactly what it fails to prove, and thus becomes a superfluous hypothesis. It is quite strange that such a hypothesis should have so readily fallen in with the natural inclination of a very large number of scholars, and for so long a time! Such a theory, indeed, is as little needed for the Saṁvat, as for the Śaka era. The reasons adduced by me above, are quite adequate to explain the indifference or looseness as we may call it, of Sanskrit writers in naming the Vikrama, the Śālivāhana, and the other eras known to them. Nor can any rational inference be drawn from the fact that the Vikrama Saṁvat is styled as 'Vikrama Śaka' in several places.

And now I come to my conclusions, which are these:—There never existed a republic in Mālava, either in the first century B.C., or before

or after it. King Vikramāditya of Ujjayini founded the Samvat era, though like the Śālivāhana Śaka era, it is vaguely called 'the system of reckoning in the Mālava country', in the earlier inscriptions. And, finally, the hypothesis which has obtained general credit among scholars, and for more than half a century—the hypothesis that seeks to account for that vagueness of style by connecting the era with Candragupta II—is as groundless in the assumption, as it is unserviceable for the purpose which it is called upon to serve.

